

September 12, 2000

CELLUCCI, SWIFT AWARD \$4 MILLION IN GRANTS TO COUNTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND STALKING

Contact:

Contact: John Birtwell 727-2759

Charles McDonald 727-7775

BOSTON -- **Governor Paul Cellucci** and **Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift** today announced the award of nearly \$4 million in grants to 95 programs operated by police, prosecutors, and victim advocates to address domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

“These grants build on existing programs to assure sexual assault and domestic violence victims have a safety net so they are not victimized by the criminal justice system after being battered, stalked or raped,” said Cellucci, chairman of the Governor’s Commission on Domestic Violence.

“Programs funded by these grants create a collaboration among police, prosecutors and battered women’s services to prevent further violence and fear on the part of female victims,” said Swift.

The grants utilize funds from the federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and are provided through the Programs Division of the Executive Office of Public Safety.

“Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault will find a network starting at the local police department which treats these cases with care within the criminal justice system,” said **Public Safety Secretary Jane Perlov**.

The programs fall under the Services Training, Officers, Prosecutors (STOP) grant program which includes initiatives which make Massachusetts a national leader in the provision of victims’ services, including:

- A new statewide training institute for prosecutors and victim-witness advocates.
 - Civilian advocates working within police departments to assist victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.
 - Enhanced capacity for community based programs to serve the elderly, non-English speaking victims, victims with mental health or substance abuse issues, and victims with disabilities.
 - Programs that provide bilingual prosecutors and victim witness advocates specializing in domestic violence and sexual assault cases in District Attorneys’ offices.
 - Regional coordinators for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners at hospitals, an HIV-AIDS liaison between rape crisis centers and hospitals to assure confidential and free testing at crisis centers for sexual assault victims, and training by the Trial Court Administration of court interpreters for disabled victims.
-